1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

the coast is broken by three large inlets, allowing of safe anchorage for schooners, with comparatively easy access to the shore, and so affording sites for coco-nut plantations, maintained for the production of copra, which, except for a little fishing for trochus shell, is the only possibility the country offers to white men. Between and behind these plantations are more native villages. The hinterland soon breaks into foot-hills, and behind these rises range after range of heavily forested mountains, a difficult region, much of which has not yet been explored. The interior is volcanic, culminating, as far as the northern half of the island is concerned, in the active volcano Balbi (9,500 ft.), an object of mysterious dread to the natives, who place there the home of their dead.

The peninsula at the north-western end of the island, the scene of many of the activities described in the following pages, slopes gently down from the cliffs on its northern shore, to a flat sandy beach bordering the bay which forms its southern boundary, some five miles distant (Pl. 1 *b*). The interior of this peninsula is covered with what I take to be secondary forest; the whole of it has probably been cleared at one time or another by the natives for their taro gardens, the positions of which they must change frequently.

A cleared track, known as 'the Government road', runs round the greater part of the coast of Buka, and, in places, when sufficiently dry, is possible for wheeled vehicles, enabling the planters to run a lorry for the collection of copra. There is a similar road along the north coast of Bougainville and down the east coast for some ninety miles, as far as Kieta, the place of residence of the District Officer and the only settlement other than isolated plantations on the island. This road is, in dry weather, also practicable for wheeled traffic for rather more than ten miles to the east of Buka Passage, but after that it encounters the Umu Mountains, which, though not high, are steep, and thenceforward a succession of rivers (innocent of bridges) and hilly patches make it improbable that the road will be available for any but pedestrians for a long time to come. It affords pleasant walking, and is much used by the natives in their numerous comings and goings, to visit relatives, to exchange commodities, or merely for fun. The people of each village are held responsible for keeping in traversable condition the stretch of road for a certain distance on either side of their village. They are supposed to work on it one day a week. The women do most of the work.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

2. *Flesh food*

262 Pig (*gū*)
Opossum (*mani*)
Flying fox (*tsūbak*)
Small variety of bat (*pupūtū*)
Iguana (*biro*)
Frogs, several kinds (generic term *kūra*) and tadpoles (*boboi*)
Insects of grasshopper species (*koka*)
Large white grub found in decaying wood (*pa'oa*)
Many kinds of birds (generic term *nōwan*)

3. *Sea food*

Many kinds of fish (generic term *ien*)
Many kinds of shell-fish (generic term *kesa*)
Crabs (generic term *kuri*)
Turtles (*gurut*)
Sharks (*kes*) (occasionally)

NOTES ON THE LIST OF FOODSTUFFS

1. *Vegetables, nuts, and fruit*

262 Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*, or *antiquorum*) may be considered the
● 244 staple food, since no meal, whatever else is included, is complete without it, and it will, if necessity arises, suffice for a meal by itself. But most people are not contented unless they have either fish or flesh as a relish (*kabu* or *warit*) to eat with it. Its cultivation occupies a very large proportion of the working time of both men and women, the men in clearing and fencing, the women in planting, weeding, and gathering. Many varieties of taro are known, differentiated by the colour of the tubers, or of the stalks or leaves, not according to taste or properties. One woman gave the names of twelve varieties in her garden, showing me each in turn from a heap she had just gathered, and pointing out their special characteristics. She said there were many more which she had not got in her garden.

137 The giant caladium, very similar in appearance to the cultivated
824 taro, except that it grows much taller, and that its leaves are much larger, grows wild in the bush. It is known as *wiar* ('bush taro').
[293] Its tubers are never eaten. The leaves attain a length of several feet, and are often used by the natives as umbrellas.

251 The women bring up each day from the taro garden only enough to last till the next day, or at most for two days. Probably because this quantity is as much as a woman can carry, no attempt is made to maintain a surplus store, although the tubers would keep for some time. One day the women could not go to the taro garden because some business connected with the *api* made it dangerous

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

Mangoes grow in the bush, but do not, so far as I know, receive any attention, though the locality of each tree is known. When passing anywhere near one, most people will turn aside to gather the fruit. They like to dip it into their lime-pot before taking a bite; this is said to add to the flavour.

Pumpkins and some forms of marrow grow in the taro garden, and in some places are found wild in the bush; possibly these are escapes. They were sometimes offered to me, but are not much used or liked.

Sugar-cane is available. Bits of it are sucked with great relish. It is tough and stringy and not very sweet; probably it suffers from lack of attention. No use is made of it except to suck sections of the cane as we eat sweets.

The long narrow fruit of the small-leaved mangrove (*parū*), which goes red when it is ripe, is collected, skinned, and put into a basket, then it is left in the sea overnight; next morning it is washed in fresh water, boiled, and eaten as a relish, with coco-nut meat.

A small Chili pepper (*nubo*) is used to flavour the water in which other food has been boiled, this liquid is then partaken of at the meal.

2. *Flesh food*

Unless some one chances to kill a wild pig in casual hunting, pig-meat is a luxury reserved for special occasions. Domestic pigs are never killed except for a feast of considerable importance. The prestige of an important feast depends upon the number of pigs that have been killed for it. If enough cannot be procured from the village supply, or caught by the hunters, the natives will, at the present time, pay as much as £10 or £12 of our money—earned as wages in serving as indentured labourers—to a trader or planter who will sell them one.

Unless they have been wounded, wild pigs caught in the bush are generally brought into the village alive. The method of carrying them is to tie the forelegs together, and the hind legs together, and swing the animal on a pole put between the legs. A pig will perhaps be brought in thus in the morning, thrown down on the ground near a hut, and left there for hours until the men are ready to kill it. Killing is usually done by plunging a spear into the animal's body just behind the uppermost foreleg, as it lies on its

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

IX

THE FOOD QUEST

262 THE principal constituents of Melanesian diet having been discussed in the previous chapter, the present one will be devoted to a description of the methods by which this food is obtained. Since vegetable produce, and in particular the taro plant, forms by far the greatest part of the diet of these people, this will first be dealt with, followed by hunting and fishing, the means whereby flesh food is provided as a much-needed 'relish' to the vegetable diet.

HORTICULTURE

● 244 242 Horticultural activities centre mainly round the provision of a sufficient crop of taro for their daily needs, with an excess at certain times for use at ceremonial feasts. This is by no means an easy task. Taro makes heavy demands on the soil, so that in the absence of any knowledge of fertilizers or of the principle of rotation of crops, a patch which has produced a crop of taro cannot be used again till it has had time to recover. In the case of the large [412] taro garden near Kurtatchi, I was told that this particular patch was last cleared by men who used stone axes, long before the oldest men in the village were born, and that it will not be used again till the sons of the present generation of babies are grown men. I suppose that this practice must, at some time or other, have been adopted as the result of experience. At any rate, they know that if you plant again in the same garden too soon the taro will be small and will not grow well.

The result of this policy is that the men and boys must see to it that fresh patches of cleared ground are always ready for the women to replant the stalks of the tubers they take out daily for their household needs. It is not always realized, I think, how large an area of land a primitive community needs to support itself, even if not nomadic. At present the inhabitants of this region have plenty of land at their disposal for the necessary shifting of their gardens, though even now gardens are often several miles from the village to which they belong. But if there should arise in the future any

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

great increase in the demand for land for commercial coco-nut plantations, it might become a serious problem. It is the practice of the Government, however, to consider very carefully all requests for land on the part of white people, and in view of the doubtful future of the copra market, the situation may never become acute. Apart from this it would be to the advantage of the natives to learn more intensive methods of using their land, so that the women might be relieved of the necessity of carrying heavy loads of taro several miles back to the village.

A piece of ground which has been cultivated and subsequently left untouched very quickly 'goes back bush', and soon becomes indistinguishable from the rest of the forest. Since the practice of continually changing the locality of the gardens has been continued for a very long time, probably little, if any, of the 'bush' in the north-western corner of Bougainville, where the soil is suitable for taro-growing, is now virgin forest. Most of it is covered with secondary growth, with very few really large trees, but with great quantities of undergrowth and of 'bush banana' plants, which grow very rapidly.

The clearing of the bush is done mainly by the men and boys; the women help by taking out the smaller undergrowth and by removing rubbish. The work of fencing is performed mostly by men. It is very necessary owing to the depredations of the pigs. When this has been done, the subsequent weeding and care of the garden is the women's business, but their menfolk will often give a hand to help them. The young married couple Matarē and Marotē frequently went off to weed their garden together. I sometimes used to go and do a day's work with them, or with other friends, gaining thereby not only useful information, but also the gratitude of the owner of the plot and some much-needed exercise. The following description of one of these occasions is included for the sake of the details it gives of a scene which, apart from my intrusive self, may be regarded as typical: 'This is being written in a taro garden, during a rest between two spells of work. We are sitting on a log under the shade of a banana palm, surrounded by taro plants at all stages of growth. A girl, somewhere in her teens, with a pipe in her mouth and flowers in her hair, is making holes in the ground with the sharpened end of a pole, while another girl drops taro stalks into them. Their bright red loin-cloths make a splash of colour in a picture that is otherwise much too green.

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

244 Presently a third comes up with a young tree balanced on each shoulder, with which to repair the fence where the pigs have broken through. An old man, entirely unencumbered by clothing of any description, alternately squats and stoops as he clears the patch of the ferns and grasses that tropical sun and rain so persistently replace. Balanced on a stump, beside the glowing embers at which the workers constantly rekindle their perpetual pipes, a baby opossum is being roasted to a turn. On the edge of the cleared patch a young man slashes with a long knife at the tangle of wild banana plants, ferns, creepers, and what-not that makes up the underbrush of a tropical forest where the trees are not too thick. Another young man, carrying a long spear, appears out of the bush where he has been hunting wild pig with the aid of the half-dozen or so lean and mangy mongrels which come bounding after him. With one accord they make a hungry rush for the roasting 'possum, which its owner hastens to retrieve and wrap in a banana leaf. Everybody stops work to light up pipes and listen to the woeful tale of the unsuccessful hunter, who explains why the pig got away. Presently he goes on, taking his curs with him, and work begins again.'

244 462 Although, as has been seen, men may, and frequently do, help with the weeding, the actual planting must on no account be done by them. The reason given by the women was that the men did not know how, and if they did it the taro would not thrive. Those who wish may see in this practice some connexion with the idea of fertility.

244 Taro for the daily needs of the household is continually planted, fresh stalks being put in whenever any are taken out. It is propagated only—so far as my information and observation lead me to believe—by replanting tops of tubers, with the stalks left attached. I have never seen or heard of offsets being used, as is reported by Williams for the Orokaiva (1928, p. 137). Each woman looks after the needs of her own family. But when a great quantity of taro is going to be needed for a special occasion, the whole village works [423] together on a large new clearing, the various sections of which, however, remain the private property of individuals. A man will mark out a patch for each of his wives, and one for his mother, if 244 she lives with him, or any other dependent female relative, including his sister, should she be a widow living in the same village. 343 During the process of clearing some of the more industrious

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

workers often erect temporary shelters (*tanū*) of banana leaves on the spot and remain there for weeks at a time, thus saving themselves the long walk to the garden in the morning and back again at night. They bring down a minimum of household goods, a sleeping-plank and a cooking-pot, and often do not trouble to construct more than a roof and a back to their shelter.

In the olden days, when stone implements were the only tools available, large trees were brought down by burning them at their base. Now that trade axes and knives can be obtained the trees are felled a few feet from the roots, leaving the stumps standing. Trees with a food value, such as canarium almonds, are always spared. The undergrowth is cut down and left lying where it falls till it is dry; eventually it is made into large heaps and burned, except for the thick stems of the bush banana plants which contain so much moisture that they will not burn. These are arranged in orderly piles, kept in place by stakes on each side, and left to rot.

In the ordinary way taro is planted as a routine matter without any ceremonial attaching to the operation. But there are certain 'medicines' which may be used if desired. Some of these are the sole prerogative of the women, some may be used by both sexes. I have a considerable number of these 'prescriptions' in my collection, some of the more interesting run as follows:

Burutū (*Eranthemum* sp.).

Chew scrapings from the roots of this plant with the betel-mixture, spit on hand, rub shell-knife with which taro stalk is trimmed before planting, and knife (trade) with which ground is weeded. Rub also on taro. Your taro will be good when other people's is bad. Used only by women.

Magor (a mixture, described on p. 475).

Chew some *magor* with betel-mixture. Spit it on to a piece of stick which grew in the taro garden, then spit on the cut end of the stalks that are to be planted, and say: '*Ar magas nor ū mū so nuts tfan.*' 'You and I spit on the taro, now it is large.' Used only by women.

Tfish (plant unidentified).

Chew roots with *magor* and betel-mixture. Spit on hand, rub on stalk of taro before planting. After doing this a man must not go fishing, and a woman must not go to the shore or hunt for shell-fish on the reef. If this prohibition is not kept the taro leaves will shrivel and dry up. The time during which it is observed was not to be ascertained.

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

244 To prevent pigs from spoiling taro:
789 *Karamuts* (plant unidentified).

Break some pieces of stick from this shrub into lengths of about two inches. Chew its root with the betel-mixture and spit on these bits of stick. Bury the sticks on the road to the taro garden. The pigs will not go into that garden. (Note that this prescription is not regarded as an alternative to good fencing!)

There are also special stones which may be planted in the garden to make the taro grow strong. They are smeared with *ois* and planted without further ceremonial. Those that I have seen are pebbles of volcanic origin, found, so their owners told me, in the beds of rivers that run to the coast from the interior. There are [439] no rivers near Kurtatchi; the stones are obtained by barter from the mountain people and are greatly valued.

244 When a large new taro garden is being made for some special
796 purpose, a ceremony is held. I saw this done on two occasions, once at a taro garden belonging to Kurtatchi, the second time at one belonging to the neighbouring village of Tabut. Both these gardens were being prepared for use at the big feast accompanying the watawutch ceremony. Since the methods of preparation and planting are generally applicable, and the ritual typical, I give an account of the procedure at the Kurtatchi garden in some detail.

Ceremony for Planting New Taro Garden

(*June 9 and 10, 1930*)

The ground had been cleared of everything except the orderly piles of rubbish, the trunks of the larger trees, and the roots of the bush bananas, with their stems standing a foot or so from the [423] ground. On the day before the ceremony the whole cleared space was laid out in plots, roughly square, marked off by long thin logs, each plot being the personal property of one individual. A passage-way about 6 feet wide ran down the middle of the whole ground, the shape of which was roughly rectangular. Part of two men's plots had not yet been cleared, but was still covered with leaves and brush-wood. The men responsible were held up to ridicule as lazy, but the censure was neither meant nor taken very seriously.

All the small bits of stick, leaves, &c., which remained on the plots having been carefully removed, little fires were lighted on each plot, burning dry coco-nut shells. The leaves of a plant (*sets*)

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

The leaves of A plant (Nets)

and another (*korowin*) were cut up into small pieces and put on these fires. [These leaves give rise to a dense smoke which spreads all over the ground. It is intended to drive away the *urar* who might wish to do harm to the taro when it is planted. The smoke of the *nets* blinds them so that they cannot see the taro. The smoke of the *korowin* is directed against pigs, it blinds them so that they will not be able to get into the garden and spoil the taro. This is intended as a protection against possible disaster in the future, since there is at this stage in the proceedings no taro on the site or anywhere near it. No other fires may be lit on or near the taro garden on that day.]

In the middle of each plot a stick between 2 and 3 feet high was set up and half a dry coco-nut shell balanced on the top of it. The taro, when planted, will look up at the coco-nut on the top of its stick and will try to grow up tall so as to hide it.

In the village a number of men were busy making ceremonial pudding. One package was made especially large, 5 to 6 feet long, a foot broad, and a couple of inches thick.

The next day the village rose in great excitement, the climax of a growing tension which had been evident for some days. (There had been a *kōma* almost every night for about a week before.) The people cut and combed their hair, and covered their heads with black paint. Some of them also put paint on their faces, outlining the forehead with white and putting red dots or streaks on their cheeks and red on their ears.

Matēv, the woman of most importance in the village, carried the packages of ceremonial pudding down to the garden, a distance of about three miles. I accompanied her. When we arrived several other women pulled up a quantity of taro from another garden in the neighbourhood and went off to Tarongen to barter it, by appointment, with the women of Saposa for half-smoked fish to use as a relish, the occasion not being of sufficient importance to warrant the killing of pigs.

Other women brought down some specially selected taro stalks which had been obtained several days before, in exchange for pots, from the women of Baniu, where the soil is said to be better and the taro finer. All the taro stalks were laid out in piles in a shady place, and the tubers carefully cut off with black-lip oyster-shell knives. The stalks were then left heaped up in the shade for the time being. On top of the heaps were placed bundles of *ōts*, a plant

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

244 824 796 with jagged red and yellow leaves, which is always planted in the taro garden and is supposed to have the effect of making the taro grow well. Cordyline plants are frequently put there also for the same purpose.

244 796 412 343 Meanwhile the men were cutting poles about 4 to 5 feet long, scraping off the bark top and bottom, and sharpening one end. These are called *isō* and are used to make the holes in which the taro stalks are planted. They form the only actual agricultural implement used in this district, since the trade knives used for clearing bush and weeding serve also a multitude of other purposes. When each man had been provided with one of these the men all went off to the new garden and put up a shelter in the middle of it, over part of the path which ran down its whole length. The shelter consisted merely of poles stuck in the ground with a layer of banana leaves laid across them, but it served to shade a small patch of ground where the *ēto* (medicine) could be prepared, and where food could be eaten away from the heat of the sun. The large packet of ceremonial pudding was laid under this shelter, together with bundles of leaves required for the 'medicine'. The food was consumed at intervals in the course of the day's work.

244 796 [562] Pinari had gone off in the early morning to look for some special leaves in the bush. When he returned, all the men, but no women —except myself, by special invitation—collected round the shelter. The women remained outside the garden, beside the heaps of taro stalks.

[415] 244 796 One of the men made a receptacle (*kōbū*) by twisting up and tying the ends of the thick fibrous sheath of the areca-palm. This he handed to Pinari, who put inside it an old *kōbū* containing a mixture of red dust and scraps of dried leaves. This mixture was not prepared on the spot, it had been obtained a long time ago from an ancestor of Pinari's living at another village, and is very highly valued. It is kept in Pinari's chief hut, and had been brought down, carefully wrapped in banana leaves, earlier in the morning. The mixture is called *tama'uŋ*. Pinari knows how to make it, but he would have to obtain some of the materials from a distance. [868] Before he dies he will teach the secret to his sons. He told me later that the mixture consisted of scrapings from the roots and leaves of a number of plants, which I was not able to identify, some of them not found locally. These are mixed with a quantity of *magur*. The mixture thus prepared is kept for use as required,

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

but other ingredients must be added just before the ceremony takes place. 244 796

Into the mixture in the *kōbū* Pinari scraped a small quantity of the red powder called *oin*, which was handed to him in two halves of coco-nut shells. Then, with an air of mysterious dignity which clearly indicated that the action was one of great importance, he produced from the folds of his loin-cloth a very small piece of stone, which looked like some volcanic substance containing sulphur. He scraped a very little of this into the mixture, which, he said, already contained some of it, and then carefully folded the remainder into his loin-cloth again. This stone is called Mumariria. The large stone from which the fragment was taken is at Soamets, a place about twenty miles down the coast to the east. [The stone lies on the edge of a little river where the mangroves grow. It belongs to the Nakarib clan, some members of which are in especially close association with it. One of these was a Soamets woman, now dead, called Mariria. If Pinari's sister's daughter, Rus, should bear a girl child, she will be called Mariria, and will inherit the special association with the stone from her namesake. If a man belonging to any other clan goes near it, the stone 'fights him' and he dies. If men from another village want to buy some of the stone to make 'medicine' for their own taro, Pinari sells them a piece off the back of the stone, which is no good, and will not make the taro grow. But when he wants it for himself he takes it from the front of the stone, then it is very powerful medicine.] [823] 244 796 778 423 433

After adding the Mumariria, Pinari called for water, which was brought in coco-nut shells. The contents of three of these were emptied into the mixture, which Pinari then stirred round with his hand. 244 796

Meanwhile the other men had been cutting small pieces of wood, each about 4 inches long, carefully measured against one another so that they should be of the same length. There were two kinds of wood, *kunis* and *tario*. The essential thing is that both these are hard wood, and so will cause the taro stalks to grow strong. If sticks of soft wood were used the taro stalks would be rotten and would stink. One piece of each kind was tied up in a bundle with two leaves of *korowin*, one leaf from a variety whose leaves are all green, the other from a kind whose leaves are green on the upper side and red underneath. The stalks of these leaves were 244 796 824

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

left sticking out of the bundle. A number of these bundles were prepared and handed to Pinari one by one. He dipped each into the *kōbū* containing the 'medicine' and smeared them with its contents, and then gave them back to the men, who went up the garden planting one beside each of the sticks holding up the coconut shells, which stood in the centre of each plot of ground. Several men took part in this procedure, there seemed to be no prerogative about it. These bundles watch over the taro and cause its stalks to grow strong.

While this was being done Sobak made a little fire of small sticks just outside the shelter, on which he very carefully placed some bits of cooked taro. These were for the *urar* who were presently to be called upon.

All this time the women had remained outside the taro garden. They were now called in by Pinari and came up in single file, each with an enormous bundle of taro stalks on her back. They went up through the cleared patch, leaving a bundle of taro stalks beside each plot, laying them out carefully and propping them up against the logs which outlined the plots.

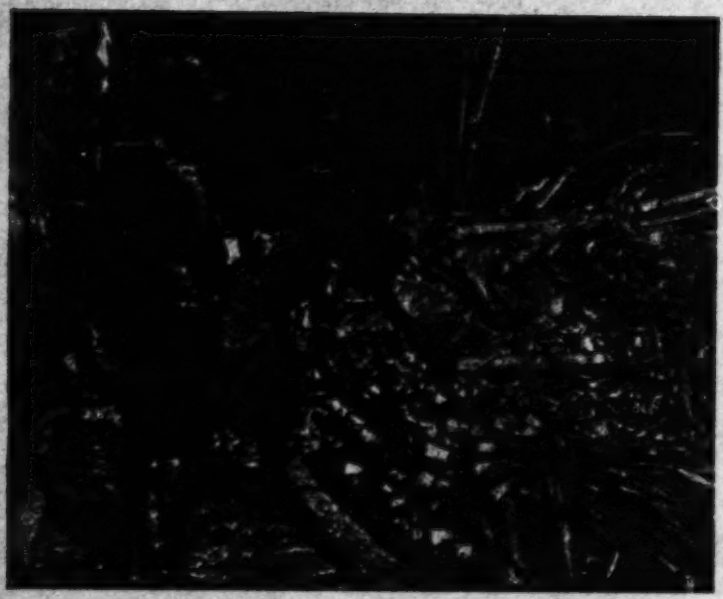
While this was going on one of the men, Watchiu, was receiving each man's digging pole, dipping it into the *kōbū*, smearing the mixture over it with his hands and giving it back again. He is a commoner, not one of the older men, nor a person of any particular importance, and no reason was given for his undertaking this part of the procedure except that he had expressed his willingness to do so. Each man, as he received his digging pole, put it on his shoulder and went off up the ground. They divided themselves among the different plots and stood ready to make the holes in which the taro stalks were to be planted.

Then Pinari took a bundle of leaves tied up together. These were the special leaves which he had gone out early to collect. The names of six different kinds were given to me; they are chosen because they are all leaves of plants which grow quickly, the idea being that the taro plants will follow their example and hasten their own growth. The bundle was laid inside the *kōbū* containing the prepared mixture, with the stalks outside.

Then Pinari's favourite wife, Kwimau, came and took up the *kōbū*. They both went up the taro ground, Pinari in front, Kwimau following close behind him. At the bundle of taro stalks which had been left at the farthest plot he stopped, took the bunch of

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 39



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796

a. SPRINKLING THE TARO STALKS WITH 'MEDICINE'

b. CEREMONY AT TABUT TARO GARDEN

[Facing p. 306]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 40

244
796

PREPARING FOR PLANTING AFTER STALKS HAVE BEEN WASHED

[FACING p. 307]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

leaves out of the *kōbū*, and brushed the cut ends of the taro stalks rapidly with it, wetting them with the *tama'ug* mixture, and stirring the stalks about with his other hand, to make sure that each stalk was touched by it. As he brushed he called out, not very loud, but in a most reverent and impressive tone: '*Ah, Buntagori, Buna-mua, Bunabo'oi, Na'uston, Mutsbut, Bunmoramor, Buna'ian. Tamū ium, tamū piar, tamū tfan.*' The first part of this consists of names of people of the village who are dead, and are now *urar*, who were good gardeners in their time. All were women, except Na'uston, who was Pinari's mother's brother. Buntagori was Pinari's mother. The second part means: 'Taro here, our taro, good taro.' He carried out the same procedure at each plot (Pl. 39*a*). The order of the names varied slightly, and the formula was sometimes as follows:

'*Di ma ta tamū pa ēto piar, no me born ia.*'
Bring (*imper. part.*) some taro by medicine our, come and throw it away.

He also dabbed the mixture on the logs outlining the plots, but without saying anything. Kwimau helped with this, but for the washing of the taro stalks she merely stood by holding the *kōbū* in readiness for Pinari to dip the bundle of leaves into it.

The *urar* thus called upon come up later on. If any of the men hide and watch for them they can see and hear them. They look at the taro that has been planted, and they laugh, and say: 'The people have planted bad taro, by and by they will have nothing to eat. Let us give them good taro.' Then they go and get good taro from Kumua, from Lontis, from Hanahan, from all the places where the taro is good, and come and plant it in place of the other, which they take up and throw away.

After washing the last bundle of taro stalks Pinari wiped his hands on some leaves, which he carefully buried under a heap of rubbish in one corner of the ground.

Kwimau held out the *kōbū* to the women, and they all washed their hands in it before going to plant the taro. Finally Kwimau dipped her own hands in the mixture and rubbed them over the legs of her youngest child, aged between one and two, who was just recovering from yaws and was very sickly-looking and backward in walking. This was done to make his legs strong. Nothing was said by her as she rubbed him with the mixture.

The *kōbū* containing the *tama'ug* mixture, from which most of

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ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

244 796 the liquid had now been used, was carefully wrapped up and put aside. At the end of the day it was taken back to the village and hung up again from the rafters of the hut from which it had been taken. When the taro stalks grow tall it is brought out again, and they are rubbed with the mixture to hasten their growth. The mixture remains in the *kōbū* permanently, being added to when required, as on the present occasion.

244 796 784 Just before Pinari and Kwimau started out to wash the taro stalks an animated discussion arose among the men. They wanted Sobak to help with the washing. But he said he did not want to be debarred from fishing. Those who perform this office may not go fishing until the taro has started to grow, and has been weeded once. If this taboo were broken the taro leaves would all shrivel up and the taro be spoiled. So Pinari excused Sobak, saying he would do it all himself. He does not fish very much in any case. Kwimau was also debarred from going near the sea, even from searching for shell-fish on the dry reef at low tide.

244 796 As Pinari finished washing each bundle of stalks the men set to work on the plots, making holes with their digging poles (Pl. 40). They pushed the poles into the ground with all the force they could muster, from some height above their heads, and then turned the pole in the ground so as to enlarge the hole. Some of the younger and more vigorous women shared in this task, but most of the women did not attempt it. As soon as the holes were ready the women planted taro stalks in them. First they took a couple of handfuls of earth out of the hole, then put two taro stalks into each, pressing them down very firmly. Then they pushed the earth they had removed down between the two stalks, pounding it down with both hands clenched. Great stress was laid upon the proper performance of this very practical procedure, and the women continually exhorted each other, and me, to press the earth down hard. If any leaves remained upon the stalk they were turned downwards and pressed into the hole, which was not always completely filled. The plants were put in about 1½ feet apart, roughly in lines.

Round the coco-nuts in the middle of each plot they planted special kinds of taro with red stalks. These are extra fine varieties. They talk to the ordinary taro, saying: 'We must grow quickly, we are afraid of these two men here who are watching us.' This refers to the two bits of wood which were planted close to the coco-nut in the middle of each plot.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

The work was done very rapidly and was well co-ordinated, so that there was no confusion, although there was a large number of people working in close juxtaposition. Though it was long after noon when the planting started the whole area was covered before sunset, except a few corners where there were not enough stalks to go round. These were finished subsequently, without further ceremony. Almost all the able-bodied people of the village were present, both men and women, with the exception of the boys wearing the *upi*. They were not allowed to come to the garden on that day, but were obliged to stay in or near the village.

The women wore no head covering. They are not allowed to wear their pandanus leaf hoods on this occasion. If any one has a *waris* relative present she must make a hood out of banana leaves. I could get no explanation of this rule against the wearing of the hood, usually very much in evidence on all ceremonial occasions, frequently worn even when custom does not require it, to protect the head when exposed to the heat of the sun, as these women were all this day.

Every one left the garden as soon as the planting was finished. It was not visited again for the next five days. After that work was resumed upon it, the remaining patches were cleared and the odd corners filled.

There was no *hōma* on the evening of the ceremony, and all next day every one stayed about the place doing nothing. They said they were tired after the hard work of planting. There was a *hōma* that evening, especially for the taro garden, but it did not go on all night.

I could get no information as to how long it would be before this taro was ready for use. They seem to judge only by looking at it.

On August 23, 1930, I saw another performance of this ceremony, on the occasion of the planting of a taro garden belonging to the village of Tabut. Although the general course of the proceedings was similar, the whole thing was much less elaborate and carried out with less dramatic effect. The principal performer chewed some roots with areca-nut and the leaves—but not the fruit, which is the usual accompaniment of areca-nut—of the betel-pepper, and touched the heaps of taro stalks with this mixture, which he spat into the palms of his hands (Pl. 39*b*). He did not call upon any *wow*. I inquired later as to this omission and was told that some people did so and some did not, but that if it had

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

been a very large and important taro garden he would have done so. The people of Tabut do not keep to the old customs as strictly as the Kurtatchi people; they have been for a longer time subject to the ministrations of a native mission teacher who is trying to make them stop all the ceremonies connected with the *urar*. It may be that this was a contributory factor. The customary rules were also relaxed so far as to permit the boys wearing the *upi* to assist at the preparations, and the women wore their hoods, neither of which was allowed at the Kurtatchi ceremony.

Coco-nuts

Coco-nuts are cultivated by all the coast natives. They do not flourish in the mountain districts.

The following are the terms applied to the coco-nut at various stages in its development:

Stage of growth.	*Kurtatchi dialect.*	*Petats dialect.*
Generic term used for the nut at all stages, and for the coco-nut palm	*ūir*	*ūel*
Very young nut	*kukūts*	*teō*
Young nut before it contains liquid		*pēsis* or *pēi*
Nut containing liquid before 'meat' appears	*konpēn*	*kakarut*
Nut with thin layer of meat at the creamy stage ('drinking coco-nut')	*mapur*	*irokil*
Nut with meat a little firmer (also used for drinking)	*wisi*	*kuvo*
Nut containing a little liquid and thick meat (the liquid at this stage is bitter and is not considered palatable)	*wakamitskoma*	*rut*
Nut the meat of which has hardened ('dry' coco-nut)	*makas* or *makas*	*lap*
Mature nut the outer skin of which is not yet dry	*arop*	*pitor*
Nut the kernel of which has become spongy	*ansen*	*tumun*
Nut which has become dry and has fallen to the ground		*tus* or *alaun*
Nut which has sprouted		*kala*

The Government encourages the natives to plant coco-nut palms, requiring trees to be started for every child born. Apart from the use of the nut as food and drink, the meat is dried in the sun or on platforms over a fire, to make copra, which is taken by the planters in exchange for trade goods, such as loin-cloths, knives, &c., or for shillings, with which the head-tax of 10*s.* per year on every adult male must be paid. But now that the copra market has fallen upon evil days, it is becoming increasingly difficult for

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

247 Most people say that this is done to protect the fruit from being eaten by parrots, but one man contradicted this statement when it was made in his presence, saying that the real reason was to make the skin of the fruit become yellow. The bananas are not gathered separately, but the whole tree is cut down and the 'rope' of fruit carried off to the house and hung up to be eaten at leisure.

I have no information regarding any magical procedure used to ensure the welfare of the banana crop, and, so far as I know, the cultivation is done without ceremonial.

Vegetables, other than taro

244 Yams are not cultivated to any great extent by the people of this district. There were none in any of the gardens belonging to the village of Kurtatchi. Some were obtained occasionally by barter. The people of Petats grew them, but they were not in season during the three months of my residence on that island, and I am not able to give any details as to the method of their cultivation.

The Petats people plant a variety of sweet potato, called *durun* in their dialect, which is tended in the same way as taro. A large stone, apparently an implement, was brought to me which its owner said he used to set up in the gardens to make the *durun* grow large. A hole is dug, and the stone is set upright in it. The owner was willing to let me have it because, having come under missionary influence, he did not intend to use it any more. The belief is that if this stone were not set up the *durun* would be small and unpalatable.

Rain-making

789 Since it is in connexion with their agriculture that the people are most dependent on the weather, and particularly on rain, this is perhaps the most appropriate place to give an account of the means which they adopt for regulating rainfall.

791 In every village there is at least one man, and often more than 566 one, who is in the possession of the carefully guarded secret of the 562 procedure for making rain. Though they are often *tsunaun*, the knowledge may be possessed also by commoners, but it is restricted to men. With this goes also the regulation of wind. One very wet day was ascribed to the fact that a famous rain-maker had just died at Saposa; as his 'skin' died the rain came down.

791 In the village of Kurtatchi the man most renowned as a rain-